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RL:0492

SB 1279, SD 1 RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Statement for Senate Committee on
Ways and Means
Public Hearing, 9 March 1983

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SB 1279 would amend HRS chapters 341 and 343 so as to make a substantial change in the administration of the State Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) system as well as some less substantial changes in environmental quality management. This statement is based on the experience of long-continued and substantial engagement by the Environmental Center in reviews of the EIS system for the Office of Environmental Quality Control and the Environmental Quality Commission and in reviews of most EIS's; on our long-continued experience of cooperation with the Office of Environmental Quality Control, the Environmental Quality Commission, and the Environmental Council; and on a statement by our Center (RL:0482) on the original version of SB 1279. The statement does not, however, reflect an institutional position of the University.

It seems unnecessary to repeat in this statement all of our previous comments on SB 1279, whose provisions we consider in general quite appropriate. We merely call attention here to two revisions that have been made in SD 1.

We considered that the prescription the original version of SB 1279 as to composition of the Council (Sec. 341-3 c), although appropriately representing a combination of the present requirements for the Council and the Commission, was unduly restrictive. The prescription has been more appropriately revised in SD 1 to call for broad and balanced representation of a number of technical and general constituencies.

SB 1279 provides in Section 343-3 (c) that the chairperson of the Council should be chosen by the Council and the original version of the bill provided that the Council meet at the call of the chairperson. However, SD 1 would have the Commission meet at the call of the Director of the Office. We consider that the Council should meet at the call of either the Director or the chairperson.